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Grassroots:  
First Nation Business in Alberta

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# GRASSROOTS

First Nation Business in Alberta

A Special Oil and Gas Industry Issue

Winter 2004

## INAC remains committed to partnerships

Economic development for First Nations is a priority of the Government of Canada and, as such, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) remains committed to establishing partnerships with other levels of government such as the Province of Alberta, regional municipalities and private industry in Aboriginal economic development projects.

These partnerships are crucial to First Nations' self-sufficiency. You might ask, why? Let's look at some of the challenges facing First Nations and Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal labour force is by far the fastest growing in Canada - something like five times the national average. The Aboriginal unemployment rate in Alberta is nearly 18 per

cent versus a non-Aboriginal unemployment rate of less than five per cent. In order for these rates to be equal, one out of every eight new jobs created in Alberta must be filled by an Aboriginal person.

The average income of an Aboriginal Albertan is approximately \$17,000 per year as compared to more than \$26,000 for their non-Aboriginal counterparts and the social assistance dependency rate for Aboriginal Albertans is 46 per cent versus less than three per cent for non-Aboriginal peoples.

These are some of the reasons that INAC has increased economic development funding more than five

fold in the last three years from \$25 million to \$125 million. This increased funding has brought unparalleled support from the private sector, First Nations communities and other governments.

Last year, in Alberta alone, an investment of approximately \$9 million of INAC economic development funds in First Nation projects leveraged an additional \$27 million in Alberta's economy. This resulted in a total investment of nearly \$40 million and the creation of more than 3,000 direct and indirect jobs.

One of the areas in which Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses have become very actively involved is Alberta's burgeoning oil and gas sector. In the pages that follow, you will read about some of those key economic development partnerships through the eyes of the Aboriginal businesses themselves. We like to think the stories that follow are prime examples not only of Aboriginal, but Canadian, business success stories.



Four Lakes Drilling Corporation employee Meynard Metchewais on Rig 298 Super Single

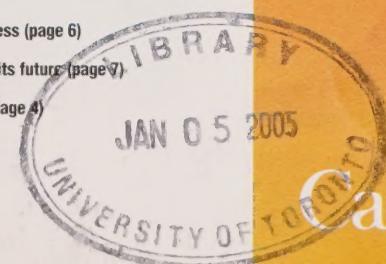
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Indian and Northern  
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes  
et du Nord Canada



Canada

# Keyano-Pimee focused on pumping up business

First Nation communities in northeastern Alberta are on the move.

As the concepts of self-sufficiency and self-government become even more desirable for First Nations, several communities in the northeast are pursuing economic ventures like never before, especially in the oil and gas industry.

While getting into the industry can be something of a gamble, it can also be profitable. For Saddle Lake First Nation, it was a gamble worth taking.

"One has to go back an entire generation, 25 or more years, to the mid-1970s, when then-Chief, the late Eugene Steinhauer, had a vision of prosperity for his reserve," said Brian Cardinal, former business manager for the band's Keyano-Pimee Exploration Company Ltd.

The oil industry displayed some serious interest in Saddle Lake lands and Steinhauer thought it would be good for the First Nation if companies could be encouraged to produce. The Nation agreed to Steinhauer's position and, following some extensive drilling, the revenues began to flow in 1977.

By 1990, when Cardinal was brought on board as the oil and gas manager, revenues were declining. By 1994-95, things were in a lull. That's when Saddle Lake, with Whitefish (Goodfish) Lake as a partner, renewed discussions with oil companies in Calgary. The First Nations had the land and resources; the oil companies had the expertise. Eventually, they signed a joint venture agreement with Auburn



*Keyano-Pimee oil drilling rig*

Energy Ltd. in 1998, created Keyano-Pimee, and never looked back.

From there, things mushroomed and Auburn Energy was acquired by Tusk Oil, a larger company aggressive in drilling and exploration. In 1999, Cardinal went from oil and gas manager to business manager for the company.

In 2001, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada contributed \$300,000 in federal

funding to assist Saddle Lake and Whitefish Lake in producing natural gas on their reserves. An equal amount was put up by the bands and 10 projected wells became their goal.

"By 2002, when I left the company, Auburn shared 21 wells with us," said Cardinal.

"As well, between 50 and 70 people were directly employed, not to mention the many business spin-offs that were created."

Now, based on its 10-well drilling program, Keyano-Pimee believes it can pull in over \$7 million a year in revenues over the next five-year period.

"The exploration company did a super job," said Cardinal.

"While most are comfortable with a 70 per cent success rate, we had 95 per cent."

Cardinal is proud of their track record and the fact that bands are demonstrating their ability to jump into the picture and be successful.

"Of course, First Nations are recognizing that partnerships with combined financial and management resources are the key to success," said Cardinal.

The financial success of Keyano-Pimee has not only created a sense of pride among members but has also lead to more and better housing.



*Keyano Compressor Station*

# Saddle Lake drills its way into the oil and gas business

In January 2003, Saddle Lake First Nation took a historic first step in the oil and gas drilling business through the acquisition of a 50 per cent interest in an oil and gas drilling rig. The joint venture with EnCana Corporation and Western Lakota Energy Services Inc. is a multi-million dollar project that will bring jobs, training and expanded business expertise to Saddle Lake.

The venture includes a 50/50 partnership with Western Lakota and a contract from EnCana Corporation to use the rig for drilling in northern Alberta and northeast British Columbia. Most impressive is the rig's drilling capacity, which can go to a depth of up to 3,700 metres. The rig also has a life span of at least 25-30 years.

The union of the three partners signals a growing trend by First Nations interest groups. First Nation ventures in the oil industry are being hailed by many and a number of the bands are projecting that spin-offs can help to resolve some of the economic woes that may afflict First Nation communities.

In May 2003, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada kicked in \$787,500 to assist Saddle Lake in the acquisition of the rig.

For the sake of present and future generations of the Saddle Lake First Nation, Chief Eddy Makokis said it is necessary for First Nation people to develop economies



*Signing ceremony with EnCana Corporation, Saddle Lake First Nation and Western Lakota Energy Services*

by partnering and participating in opportunities like this.

"This project is very important to our community and members," said Chief Makokis.

"We are determined to work with industry and government to maximize economic benefits from resource development, while ensuring the protection of our Treaty rights and the enhancement of our traditional ways."

Andy Popko, Vice-President of Aboriginal Affairs for EnCana Corporation, expressed a great deal of optimism on the rig's future. In fact, EnCana was so confident about its possibilities for future success that it supported the First Nation in its efforts to obtain private financing.

"The purchase of this rig is a clear illustration of our concept of capacity building with communities where we have an operating interest," said Popko.

"Not only is it a business opportunity on its own, but the purchase also signals the Saddle Lake First Nation's intent to develop on-reserve skills that can be applied

throughout the oil patch. EnCana fully recognizes the potential that Aboriginal communities have in developing the labour so desperately needed by our growing industry."

Discussions with Saddle Lake originated about a year ago, after Elson McDougald, President of Western Lakota Energy Services Inc., was invited to make a presentation to the Saddle Lake Chief and Council. According to McDougald, although the First Nation had a very positive attitude towards economic development, there was a learning process to go through.

"We had to convince them of the economic merits and financial sustainability of the energy service business," said McDougald.

McDougald, whose oilfield experience goes back to 1963, said he would like to pass on his knowledge to Aboriginal people.

"Training is there for those wanting to enter the oil industry," said McDougald.

"We start with on-the-job training, then line them up with courses on safety and first-aid and, finally, provide training for them to move up the ladder to motor man, derrick man, driller and so on."

Ten new jobs were created by this project, as well as a potential 77 indirect jobs in the oil and gas sector. In addition, Saddle Lake members will be provided with training that will ensure transferable job skills in the drilling industry beyond this present partnership.

# EnCana Corporation helps build Aboriginal drilling company

In a remote corner of the northeast Alberta muskeg, a shiny new drilling rig is tapping the social and economic riches of the province's Aboriginal and geological resources.

A crew that includes rookie Aboriginal rig hands — members of four northeast Alberta First Nations — is operating Precision Drilling Corporation Rig 298 Super Single, exploring for EnCana Corporation (formerly Alberta Energy Company, or AEC).

In December 2001, the rig's first well marked the working start of a 50/50 partnership between the Precision Drilling Corporation and the Four Lakes Drilling Corporation. Commonly referred to as East Central Alberta Treaty 6, or ECAT6, the partnership is a joint venture of the Kehewin, Frog Lake, Cold Lake and Heart Lake First Nations.

The Four Lakes/Precision Drilling partnership is a historic venture, enabling Canada's First Nation communities to own and operate an oil-well drilling company and provide employment and training opportunities for their people. Conceived in September 2000 by AEC, the project was announced in April 2001 by the participants. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada contributed \$1.1 million towards the project.

Drilling more than 1,000 wells per year, AEC backed the business idea by promising a solid foundation of work and guaranteeing the rig 1,000 days of drilling at competitive rates, over the next four years. Precision, Canada's largest drilling company, took part ownership and lead the construction and operation of the rig. The four First Nations supplied investment and the people to run the operation.

"This has been a great success. It's emblematic of what we call capacity building," said Andy Popko, EnCana's Vice-President of Aboriginal Affairs.



*First Nation drummers at a signing ceremony in Cold Lake First Nations*

"Through our daily business investments, we look for ways that residents of communities where we operate can participate in sustainable businesses that help their people. In this instance, the four First Nations are the proud new owners and operators of a top-notch drilling rig and its employees face a bright future in Canada's dynamic energy industry."

"To get this opportunity is a good feeling, working on a Native rig. We can develop a

*Continued on Page 7*

## Learning to get along in Wood Buffalo

Up north, the mammoth draglines and bucket wheels, once solely symbolic of oil sands operations, have been making way for more energy-efficient truck-and-shovel and hydro transport technologies.

Along with the new equipment comes big plans — more than \$80 billion to finance expansion and significant increases in oil production. This is good news for Canadians interested in energy security and economic opportunity. But what about the several First Nation communities situated next door to this huge and complex beehive of industrial activity? Do they stand to benefit as well? Or will they watch in uncomprehending awe from the sidelines as the show goes by?

"It's fair to say that no one is more naturally affected by oil sands industry development

than First Nations," said Chief Jim Boucher, President and Chairperson of the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC), which represents five First Nations in the Wood Buffalo region (Fort McKay, Fort McMurray, Athabasca Chipewyan, Chipewyan Prairie and Mikisew Cree).

"The deposits and much of the mining activity occur in areas that are directly within our sphere of living."

Boucher, who is also Chief of the Fort McKay First Nation, points out that productive one-on-one relationships have been developed over the years with long-time producers Suncor and Syncrude, addressing mutual concerns. But when the floodgate opened in the mid-1990s and the multi-billion dollar investments began to pour in, First Nation communities began to wonder about cumulative effects and about whether or not they were adequately equipped to fully participate in and influence development.

"In effect, we wanted to regionalize our relationship with the developers," said Boucher.

"We hoped to maintain individual relationships, while striking a bargain that would bring everyone involved to the table to share information and to learn, plan and work together."

The result, stemming from a strategic plan developed by the ATC, was the capacity building agreement signed for a three-year term beginning in 1999.

Co-funded by industry and the provincial and federal governments, the agreement addressed issues related to environmental impacts, employment and training, community development and infrastructure. In essence, the agreement aimed to better impart knowledge so that the First Nations might

*Continued on Page 6*

# Mikisew Slings & Safety Ltd.: quality products, guaranteed service

**Location. Location. Location.**  
As the real estate saying goes,  
the secret to success in business  
is location.



*Mikisew Slings & Safety Ltd. worker*

When Mikisew Cree First Nation first considered getting into the manufacturing industry, they planned to locate on their reserve in Fort Chipewyan, about 700 kilometres north of Edmonton. When time and distance proved to be insurmountable problems, they chose Edmonton.

It proved to be the right move as Mikisew Slings & Safety Ltd., a fledgling member of the Mikisew Cree Group of Companies, celebrated its first anniversary in September 2003 as the largest supplier of standard and custom industrial slings in Western Canada. Inside a 17,000 square-foot facility, production sewers convert webbing into round and web-style slings which are sold throughout their distribution area. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada was pleased to contribute to its success through \$300,000 in economic development funding.

The company, wholly owned by the Mikisew Cree First Nation and its membership, has a commitment to providing quality products and guaranteed service at reasonable prices. This is already being achieved in its initial year due, in large part, to its experienced leadership and well-trained employees.

Company president Allan Taschuk has 15 years experience and Mikisew Slings & Safety is the third company he has had a hand in starting.

"It's a highly competitive business with about 15 to 20 others in the field," said Taschuk.

"But we had a ready market in the northeast Alberta region."

The company's products are sold through their distributor, Acklands-Grainger, to Suncor, Syncrude Canada Ltd., Albion Sands and Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Ltd., to name a few.

It has been a very busy first year and the company is already looking to add to their product line and increase their market share. To this end, the company appointed its first sales person this fall.

"Promotion and exposure are important," said Taschuk.

"We have our name and logo on everything. Perhaps that's where some companies go wrong — they do good work but don't promote themselves enough."

A key factor in the decision to locate their business in Edmonton was to provide employment for Mikisew Cree First Nation's urban members. Of the current 14 employees, 70 per cent are First Nation members who have been trained by Taschuk and are working in all areas of the business. With education and industry-

specific training, the company believes assisting employees achieve their goals will also ensure the company reaches its goals.

An example of industry-specific training is sewing the webbing to make slings. Production sewers have built on their home sewing experience to operate industrial sewing machines, thereby creating designs that ensure the strength of the synthetic webbing. The company produces about 5,000 slings a month.

The facility also houses a Proof Load Test Bed to test its used slings, cables and chains. Mikisew Slings has a 5:1 safety ratio standard for their products, which are tested to the point of destruction. For example, if a sling breaks at 10,000 lbs., it is rated for use safely at 2,000 lbs.

The safety considerations of the business resulted in an early partnership with Norguard Industries. Through an alliance with this major manufacturer, Mikisew Slings & Safety is also able to re-sell fall protection and height-related products, such as safety harnesses.



*Mikisew Slings & Safety Ltd. worker*

From its location in south Edmonton, Mikisew Slings & Safety builds on its success, continuing to offer its customers the best in customer service, manufacturing and testing of products while, at the same time, developing a highly trained and skilled workforce.

# LRC Contractors Ltd.: formula for success

Since its inception in 1992, Loon River Cree (LRC) Contractors Ltd. has worked hard to achieve success in all that it does. From its start as a small labour contractor, it has grown to where it now has annual sales of over \$2 million.

The company, owned by the Loon River First Nation, was established to take advantage of business and employment opportunities arising from oil exploration, construction and production on their reserve lands and surrounding area. Loon River, near Red Earth Creek, is about two hours from Slave Lake.

"There was a lot of good labour and sawmen in the area," said Brian Pitcairn, company manager for the past seven years.

"We got contracts in seismic clearing and other cutting and hand falling work and we paid the workers ourselves."

LRC was also involved in many of the First Nation's construction projects on the reserve, including road grading.

Six years ago, LRC decided owning heavy equipment was necessary if it were to stay in business. Company profits and their own credit



*LRC Contractors Ltd. heavy equipment*

line enabled them to purchase five caterpillar tractors, three track hoes and two graders over the next few years. The company is proud to say the debt is now about 60 per cent retired. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada also contributed \$90,000 in 2002/2003 to help them purchase equipment.

The company also subcontracts out equipment. Right now, two tanker trucks are subcontracted for crude oil transportation.

It has not been easy for the company's owners. Their initial bid to get into business didn't go over very well with competitors in the area. It took considerable negotiation with head offices of energy companies to allow them to get their foot in the door. The ongoing relationships have enabled LRC to conduct business without any formal contracts.

Another issue the company had to deal with was the difficulty in attracting workers to the area when local labour was not available, especially since their work is seasonal.

The bottom line is not the only measure of the accomplishments of LRC Contractors. When they got into the heavy equipment business, there were not too many Loon River First Nation members who were qualified operators.

Through experience and on-the-job training, qualified operators are now the majority.

Does LRC Contractors Ltd. consider itself successful?

"Yes," emphatically states Pitcairn.

"We're beginning to establish a good track record with banks and energy companies. We've managed to overcome opposition from other contractors in the area and we've changed the views of field staff employed by energy companies. We are operating a profitable company and we're employing more Loon River First Nation members as well as others."

While the company has no immediate expansion plans, they are aware of heavy oil exploration coming into their area and the possibility of diamond exploration seismic work in the future.

LRC Contractors Ltd. will undoubtedly continue using its formula for success in these and other ventures.

## WOOD BUFFALO

*Continued from Page 4*

further develop the capacity to procure oil sands jobs and business opportunities and to succeed in them on a competitive basis, while preserving the social and environmental integrity of the communities.

"Indeed, it's been a great deal for everybody involved," said Eric Newell, Chairman and CEO of Syncrude Canada Ltd., one of the Athabasca regional developers who are party to the agreement.

"It affords a greater deal of clarity in all things. We know better where we stand and what we've got to do to address any concerns and, in the Aboriginal community, we've got access to one of the best workforces anywhere."

Perhaps the best sign of the overall success of the agreement is its recent renewal for a second term. Governments, including \$1.2 million from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, have again pitched in and other players like Shell Canada have come on board. As intended, First Nation communities continue to strengthen their roles in oil sands development.

Chief Boucher points out that annual Aboriginal procurement contracts with oil sands partners have increased from \$60 million to \$250 million over the three years. As well, over 1,000 Aboriginal people are now employed in the industry at an average annual salary of \$70,000.

While the development of capacity is synonymous with the eventual achievement of a brand of self-reliance that does not necessarily require the guidance of set programs or policies, the large scale and dizzying pace of oil sands development does, for now, suggest a need for a degree of assured formality and recourse, if needed. In any event, mammoth projects or not, northern Alberta's capacity building agreement sets a high standard for others as an excellent and innovative model of cooperation among parties.

# Fort McKay First Nation takes charge of its future

Like a great hurricane gathering force, more than \$80 billion of new oil sands development now underway in northern Alberta is bound to carry a punch powerful enough to affect everyone and everything in its path. And the people of Fort McKay are no exception.

Located right in the middle of the Athabasca Oil Sands Deposit, one of the largest oil reserves on earth, the First Nation stood to either parlay its position into a slice of a very significant economic pie or be engulfed. With a great degree of foresight, Fort McKay began preparing for the oil sands storm back in 1986 when Suncor and Syncrude were the only games in town and, even then, mere shadows of their current giant selves.

"I think that people in the rest of Alberta and Canada really started paying attention to the oil sands in the mid-1990's when this current round of expansion began," said Fort McKay Chief Jim Boucher.

"But for us, even before that, we only had to look as far as our own back yards to see that our economy and way of life was going to be affected by all this activity and that we'd better be prepared to deal with it effectively."

Over the years, the community has participated in a variety of initiatives designed to help ensure it earns a fair share of opportunity while preserving its unique ways of life, heritage and culture.

## **ENCANA CORP.**

*Continued from Page 4*

good business sense running this rig and not just one, maybe four or five [rigs] to make this company grow," said floor-hand Meynard Metchewais of the Cold Lake First Nations.

It was a proud day for everyone when several tractor trailers rolled onto the Cold Lake First Nations reserve carrying the new rig.

"My mother (Cold Lake First Nations Chief



*Fort McKay Industrial Park  
sod turning ceremony  
with Chief Boucher*

Recently, the community spearheaded the establishment of the prototype Fort McKay Industrial Park.

The park, a \$3.4 million project that received \$1.5 million in funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, is the first industrial subdivision zoned north of Fort McMurray, a little more than a half hour's drive away. On 28 hectares of land, the park offers serviced industrial lots to companies looking for the advantages of close-up contact with oil sands operators. Fort McKay and other First Nations in the surrounding area will operate businesses located in the park, providing them with the opportunity to establish long-term relationships with private industry through contracting goods and services to the oil sands on a one-on-one basis or in joint ventures.

Joyce Metchewais) said she couldn't believe it, seeing the trucks bring this machine onto our reserve. It makes you feel good to help build a stable reserve," said Metchewais.

The Four Lakes rig venture is one of many Aboriginal capacity-building initiatives that EnCana has participated in over the past several years. EnCana partners with many Aboriginal-owned businesses that are hired to supply countless services to the company's

The First Nation has also inked a deal with Shell Canada to help assure participation in the new multi-billion dollar Athabasca Oil Sands Project. The deal with Shell, 60 per cent owner of the project, includes the nearby Muskeg River Mine. Valued at about \$27 million — including federal funding of \$1.75 million — the project will maximize Fort McKay's participation in a large-scale industrial operation that will provide 10 per cent of Canada's oil needs.

The bulk of Fort McKay's funds were devoted to the purchase and operation of heavy equipment and the construction of maintenance shops and other facilities on Crown land adjacent to the mine site. The agreement also provides for a minimum of 75 per cent of the employment and business opportunities for Fort McKay First Nation members for the duration of the project. About 100 jobs for Aboriginal people will be created over the next five years.

"These projects are among the latest in our ongoing efforts to generate meaningful business and employment opportunities for the people of our community," said Chief Boucher.

"I'm very pleased with the success we've had and optimistic that we will continue to earn our way, to add value and to stay true to ourselves."

And with more of the right mixture of leadership and partnership applied to the warm and cold fronts of opportunity and challenge, a perfect storm of prosperity seems to be brewing just over the horizon.

field operations. Contracts are issued based on good, sound cost-competitiveness and a solid reputation for performance. And the partnerships succeed because the suppliers and contractors perform well, control costs and honour contracts.

"By committing to keep these rigs running for a number of years, the new companies are able to generate sustainable revenues for the communities involved. It's the kind of success that we seek to repeat elsewhere," said Popko.

# Cleaning up in Fort Chip

In the often unsung business of industrial waste management, the general population might tend to measure the value of the service by the inconveniences or even more severe consequences of no service at all.

On the surface, it may not seem the most glamorous of vocations. But dig a little deeper in Fort Chipewyan, one of Alberta's oldest and most northern settlements, and Denesoline Environment Ltd. emerges in shining contrast to the stereotype. Wholly-owned by the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, it is an inspiring example of the unfettered application of ingenuity over narrow-mindedness and action-inspiring vision over bureaucratic daydreaming.

In short, Denesoline has made an energetic, respectable and profitable art of handling the cast-off debris of Canada's oil sands industry.

"For centuries, we've lived in a demanding and unforgiving northern environment," said Athabasca Chipewyan Chief Archie Cyprien.

"But it's also an environment that encourages and rewards the hard work and the acquisition of knowledge, whether it means catching fish, building shelter against the elements, or establishing a successful enterprise like Denesoline."

Denesoline was set up in 1994 to handle Syncrude Canada Ltd.'s waste management operations. A major player in Canada's burgeoning oil sands industry, Syncrude is not the kind of company that just gives opportunities like this away. Excellence is expected in all things. And, even with particularly progressive Aboriginal development policies in place, its business must be earned in a very competitive environment.



*Denesoline Waste Management truck*

For almost 10 years, Denesoline has built a reputation for quality service. The initial five-year contract with Syncrude is still going strong. Suncor Inc., Petro Canada and Albion Sands Energy Inc., the newest oil sands industry entrant, have all been added to the client roster. Janitorial and related services have now been added to the list of corporate offerings.

The latest project, a \$2.8 million expansion, partially supported by a \$400,000 contribution from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, includes the purchase of new equipment and facilities, much of it for Albion. The work will generate more than \$1 million a year in wages for Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation members. It will provide employment and training opportunities in heavy equipment operation and other trades. And the investment also helps increase the Denesoline workforce from seven people in 1995 to 194 this year.

That is impressive for a community that boasts 600 - 700 members, many who live off-reserve. And it is also a particularly significant number measured against the backdrop of an isolated, but close-knit community. Fort Chipewyan, about 300 kilometres north of Fort McMurray, is only accessible by air in the summer.

"Up here, getting ahead doesn't mean beating out the guy in the next cubicle," said Chief Cyprien.

"Up here, success in business means creating viable alternatives, especially for our young people, to stop them from moving away in search of opportunities somewhere else. It means creating those opportunities ourselves right here at home."

A very noble pursuit and not such an unsung business after all.

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Le nettoyage va bon train à Fort Ghil

Pendant près de 10 ans, Deneosline s'est taillé une réputation de fournisseur de services de qualité. Le contrat initial d'une durée de 5 ans avec Syntac, basé tout d'abord à Plein-Sucor, a été étendu de deux années supplémentaires. Petit à petit, l'entreprise a étendu son activité à la vente dans le secteur des petites et moyennes entreprises, soit venues toutes trois grossir la liste des clients. De plus, les services de nettoyage et d'entretien let services connexes viennent d'être ajoutés à la gamme de services offerts.

Nord Canada, consistente en l'achat de nouvelles installations, dont la plus grande partie sera attribuée à la Société Albian. Les travaux devraient être effectués dans le cadre du projet de raffinerie de pétrole de Chibougamau. La première nation des Chipewyans d'Athabasca. Au nombre de 400 000 \$ octroyé par Affaires intérieures et du 2,8 millions de dollars, y compris une subvention de 2,8 millions de dollars, destinée au développement du secteur forestier dans les domaines, mentionnés des possibilités d'emplois et de formation dans les communautés, mentionnées dans le document intitulé « Autres mesures ».

Par ailleurs, cet investissement a entraîné une hausse de l'effectif de la société Deneosolime, passant ainsi de 7 employés en 1995 à 194 cette année. Société Deneosolime, spécialisée dans l'investissement et l'aménagement des terrains, a ouvert un bureau à Chibewaya, qui est à quelque 300 kilomètres au nord de Fort McMurtry, n'est accessible que par voie aérienne.

« « Ici, chez nous, réussir ne signifie pas démentir le gars qui travaille dans l'heurea d'a souligne le chef Cyprine. Ici, la réussite dans les affaires vaut des options variables, et particulier pour nos jeunes, »

Il faut donc de créer ces opportunités nous-mêmes, ici, chez nous. »

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Place du Canada Bureaux indiens de l'Alberta	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	Jorry Johnson
Gens d'ici - Entreprises autochtones en Alberta	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	Denosline a été créée en 1996 pour occuper des opérations de gestion
Publie avec l'autorisation du ministre des Affaires indiennes et	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	des déchets de la Société Syncrude Canada Ltd. Géante du flotissant
du Nord Canadien	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	société des déchets Petro-Canada. Syncrude n'est pas le genre de
Ottawa 2004 www.ainc.gc.ca 1 800 567-9604	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	l'entreprise qui offre des déchets comme celui-ci n'impose que
ATS seulement : 1 866 553-0554	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	l'excellence est dans l'ensemble voulu sur tous les plans. Et même avec une
Canada	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	politique stable, particulièrement progrésive, pour favoriser le
© Ministre des Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	développement économique chez les Autochtones, Syncrude insiste pour
Taductioin : Revenen Erenberge, Translatech	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	que ses contrats d'approvisionnement fassent l'objet d'un processus
Veuillez adresser vos correspondances, commentaires et	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	d'appel d'offres hautement concurrentiel.
Une très noble vision et non un travail si ingrat, après tout.	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	de développement économique chez les Autochtones, Syncrude insiste pour
Il s'agit donc de créer ces opportunités nous-mêmes, ici, chez nous.	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	l'excellence est dans l'ensemble voulu sur tous les plans. Et même avec une
affaires veut dire créer des options viables, en particulier pour nos jeunes,	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	société qui offre des déchets comme celle-ci n'impose que
le bureau d'a côté, à souligner le chef Lypréen, ici, la réussite dans les	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	l'excéllence est dans l'ensemble voulu sur tous les plans. Et même avec une
autres déchets de la Société Syncrude Canada Ltd. Géante du flotissant	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	politique stable, particulièrement progrésive, pour favoriser le
société qui offre des déchets Petro-Canada. Syncrude n'est pas le genre de	Edmonton (Alberta) T5J 4G2	l'entreprise qui offre des déchets comme celle-ci n'impose que

The image is a composite of two photographs. The left side shows the interior of a traditional house in Fort Chipewyan, featuring a central fireplace and wooden beams. The right side shows a modern industrial facility, specifically an oil refinery, with several large storage tanks and processing units under a clear sky.

# La Première nation de Fort McKay prend son avenir en main

**GENS D'ICI**

60 à 250 millions de dollars au cours des trois années suivantes. Par ailleurs, les sommes versées par l'entretien, les assurances et les autres dépenses devraient être de 100 000 Autochtones employés dans ce secteur toutefois que leur salaire annuel moyen de 70 000 \$.

.....

Même si l'entreprise n'a pas de projet d'expansion dans l'immédiat, elle sait que des initiatives actives d'exploration peuvent être effectuées dans le secteur de diamants autrement bientôt dans la région.

La LRC Ltd. continue sans aucun doute à utiliser la même formule pour connaître succès dans ces projets parmi d'autres à venir.

« Nous commençons à nous tailler une excellente réputation auprès des banques et des sociétés du secteur de l'énergie. Nous sommes partvenus à vaincre la concurrence des autres entrepreneurs dans la région et nous avons réussi à modifier par les entreprises du secteur de l'énergie, employé exploitations une compagnie rentable et nous compatriotes, entre autres, de la Première nation Loon d'employés membres de la Première nation Loon

« Oui, bien sûr », a noté

Est-ce que la LRC  
Contractors Ltd. se  
considère prospère?

formation acquises en cours d'emploi, les emplois d'emploi, les emplois qualifiés en représentent maintenant la majorité.



LRC Contractors Ltd. dévoile le secret de son succès

**GENS-DIGI**  
Entreprises autochtones en Alberta



L'application des empêchements dans le sud d'Edmonton, Mikisew Crisis Lines & Safety mise sur un service hours par day en continuant d'offrir à la clinique une réussite dans les domaines de la sécurité et de la santé mentale.

l'industrie de l'énergie et de la sécurité. L'entreprise est associée à la compagnie NorGuard qui dépend du groupe Mikraw Safety Systems. Mikraw Safety Systems est une entreprise de sécurité qui fabrique des systèmes de sécurité pour les industries pétrolières et gazières. La compagnie NorGuard est une entreprise de sécurité qui fabrique des systèmes de sécurité pour les industries pétrolières et gazières.

Une unité de production offre aussi un banc d'essai de la résistance par traction servant à déchirer les usages. Soumis à des essais jusqu'à au point de destruction, les produits de Miles et Blings présentent un coefficient de sécurité de 51%. Par exemple, si une élingue cassé sous une charge de 10 000 livres, sa charge nominale recommandée sera de 2 000 livres.

Un exemple de l'assemblage des sangsles pour sécateur est l'assemblage de la partie inférieure au sécateur et la partie supérieure de la partie inférieure.

Un des arguments en faveur de la délocalisation d'entreprise à l'étranger est que les emplois aux normes de la France sont des emplois vitaux en milieu urbain. Miklesew vivait en effet dans le quartier des 14 emplois actifs, 70 % sont des Autochtones formés par M. Taschuk et qui travaillent dans les secteurs de l'entrepreneuriat et de l'industrie. La campagne croit que l'enseignement peut être amélioré pour aider les employés à trouver un travail dans d'autres secteurs.

C'est peut-être là où d'autres se trompent. Ils sont du bon boulot mais ils ne savent pas bien se vendre. »

« Se promouvoir et se montrer sont deux choses primordiales », a expliqué M. Taschuk.

Ensuite des produits à gamme étendue dédiés à l'entrepreneuriat et à la recherche et développement. La société a également son premier agent commercial cet automne.

« Mais nous avons un marché pré-établi dans le nord-est de l'Alberta. »

Les produits de la société sont vendus par ses distributeurs, Aklands-Grammer, Suncoo, Syncrude Canada Ltd., Albian Sands et Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Ltd. Pour une norme due quelqueuns.

Alain Laschuk, président de l'entreprise, a cumulé 15 ans d'expérience dans le domaine des Mikrosw Slings & Safety est la troisième entreprise qu'il a aidée à voir le jour.

C'est un secteur hautement concurrentiel où on retrouve 15 à 20 autres entreprises », a souligné M. Laschuk.

entreprise, possède en propriété exclusive la Première nation des Cris de Mikisew car les membres, à pris l'engagement de fournir des produits de qualité de garantir que leurs services à des prix raisonnables. Voilà ce que l'entreprise a déjà réalisé lors de son année magique. Fait attristant, en grande partie, à ses dirigeants expérimentés et à ses employés bien formés.

Cette décision a porté ses fruits, car la Société Mikisew SIngs & Savey Ltd., nouvelle membre amoureuse au Canada d'Elfingues Industries, a amélioré sa production comme les plus grandes compagnies du secteur. Ainsi, elle a atteint des standards et faites sur commande. A l'instar de la plupart des autres entreprises d'Elfingues Industries, Mikisew Sing's & Savey Ltd. a obtenu une unité de production de 17 000 pieds cubes, soit une augmentation de 300 000 \$ affectée au développement économique.

Lorsque la première nation des Cris de Mikesew songeait à accéder au secteur de la fabrication, elle pensait à installer dans leur 700 km² de terrains situés à environ 200 km au sud d'Edmonton, une usine de transformation de bois et de charbon de bois. C'est alors qu'ils ont rencontré l'organisme Fort Chipewyan First Nation qui a proposé de leur donner un emplacement à 70 km au sud-ouest de Fort Chipewyan, sur la rivière Athabasca, où il y a une grande quantité de charbon de bois et de bois pour la fabrication de papier.

Mikisew Slings & Safety Ltd.



Le remplacement, l'emplacement et ren que  
l'emplacement. Come on l'entend si  
souvent dans le secteur de l'immobilier :  
« L'emplacement est la clé de la réussite  
dans les affaires. »

**produits de qualité, service garanti**

**Mikisew Slings & Safety Ltd.**

Sous le ministère du Trésor, le Secrétaire à l'Énergie et les

Il en a résulté la conclusion d'une entente sur le fonctionnement des compétences — le futur plan stratégique éaboré par l'ATC — qui détermine les trois ans à partir de 1999.

« Nous souhaitons maintenir des rapports privilégiés tout en conservant un marché qui autorise pour l'avenir la reassemblée des parties concernées afin qu'elles partagent de l'information en plus d'apprendre, de planifier et de travailler ensemble. »

« En fait, nous voulons régionaliser les promotions que nous entretiennent avec les promoteurs », a déclaré M. Bouchez. L'expansion et l'influence sur le développement du projet prendra une part importante dans la construction d'un véritable continent qui répondra aux besoins des communautés et sera demandé à l'international.

# Wood Buffalo

Suite à la page 7

C'est par le biais de nos investissements commerciaux qu'outremer que nous cherchons à créer des synergies avec les collectivités ou nos partenaires sociaux nos activités permanent part à des entreprises viaables qui profitent à leurs membres. Dans le cas présent, les quatre Premières nations ont les meilleurs nouveaux programmes et xploitants d'un appareil de forage de grande amme brillant pour les employés à l'œuvre dans le secteur dynamique de l'énergie au Canada. »



aidé une entreprise autochtone de forage à voir le jour

# La Société Engana

Selon le chef Eddy Makosi,

pour le bien des

forage.

permet à Saddle Lake d'acquérir un appariel de par Affaires Indiennes et du Nord Canada à En mai 2003, une subvention fédérale octroyée

collectives autochtones.

économiques qui risquent de porter atteinte aux collectives autochtones.

puissent aider à résoudre certains des problèmes banques autochtones dans le secteur d'entreprises

d'intérêts autochtones. Nombreux sont groupes d'une tendance croissante de la part des

autrui de ces trois partenaires témoin que

durée de vie d'un moins 25 à 30 ans.

capacité de forage de l'appareil qui peut être dans 3 700 mètres de profondeur. La part des

Britannique. Le tract dominant du projet est la bord de l'Alberta et le nord-est de la Colombie-

parties égales avec la Société Encana. Cette dernière connaît avec la Western Dakota ainsi qu'un

La coentreprise est consistante d'un partenariat à

domaine des affaires.

d'extension de connaissances dans le

premier nation de Saddle Lake en termes

entraîne d'importantes retombées pour la

plutôt millions de dollars qui

Western Dakota Energy

la Société Encana et la

gazier. La coentreprise avec

l'exploitation pétrolière et

entrepôt sur le marché de

d'accueillir 50 % des intérêts

historique, puisqu'elle venait

déterminante dans son

français une étape

En janvier 2003, la Première

nation de Saddle Lake a

l'inauguration de la

Énergie

## La station de compression Keyano



La réussite financière de la société Keyano-Pime a non seulement inspiré à ses membres un sentiment de fierté, mais elle a aussi permis d'améliorer les conditions de logement.

M. Cardinal. « Bien entendu, les Premières nations alliaient ressources pécuniaires et ressources de reconnissance volontaires que les partenariats réussissent sortir les clés de la réussite », a ajouté M. Cardinal.

M. Cardinal est fier des antécédents des siens et du fait que les bandes aient pu mettre en valeur leur capacité de saisir l'occasion pour prospérer.

« Alors que la plupart des campagnies se contentent d'un taux de réussite de 70 %, nous nous avions atteint les 95 % », nous,

trouve M. Cardinal. « L'entreprise d'exploration a fait un excellent travail », juge M. Cardinal.

Fort de son programme de forage à dix puits, Keyano-Pime croit être en excellente position pour les compagnies qui ont années.

« Par ailleurs, nous compptions entre 50 et 70 multipes débouchés », affirme M. Cardinal.

« Lorsque j'ai quitté l'entreprise en 2002, nous avions 21 puits en commun avec Aurora », a affirmé M. Cardinal.

En 2001, Affaires indiennes du Nord Canada a octroyé une subvention fédérale de 300 000 \$ au projet un montant égal et se sont fixées comme objectif l'implantation de dix puits.

Le lac et Whitefish Lake à produire du gaz naturel au sein de leurs réserves. Les collectivités autochtones ont contribué au succès du programme de forage à dix puits.

« Lorsque j'ai quitté l'entreprise en 2002, nous

concluaient une entente relative à un projet confié à la Aurora Energy Ltd., donnant ainsi naissance à la société Keyano-Pime.

Des lors, les opérations de la Aurora Energy prennent rapidement de l'ampleur, et la société a été acquise par Task Oil, une plus grande entreprise qui exerce des activités minières de forage à d'exploration. En 1999, M. Cardinal est passé de directeur chargé de services gaz et pétrole à directeur des opérations de l'entreprise.

En 1990, année où M. Cardinal a été placé à la tête de l'entreprise à titre de directeur chargé du service gazier et

sont mises à couler à flots.

« Il faut remonter au milieu des années 1970, » dit Eugène Schenauer, avant de rappeler que notre

compagnie était alors dirigée par le seul Saddle Lake, on peut dire que

« Il faut remonter au milieu des années 1970, »

« L'industrie pétrolière manifestait un vif intérêt

pour sa Première nation si les entreprises M. Schenauer négociait qu'il servait à y exercer leurs

activités. La Première nation Sédati a obtenu d'activités minières à la suite de l'accord entre les deux nations. La Première nation Sédati rangea

pour la première fois dans la compagnie à la fin des années 1977, à la suite de l'accord entre les deux nations. La Première nation Sédati rangea

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Un appareil de forage pétrolier appartenant à la Société Keyano-Pime.



Les collectivités autochtones du nord-est de

Alberta sont en bonne voie.

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Les collectivités autochtones du nord-est de

Alberta sont en bonne voie.

Les collectivités autochtones du nord-est de

# le débordé d'énergie

## la société Keyano-Pime

Entreprises autochtones en Alberta  
GENS D'ICI

- ✓ La Société Keyamo-Premie déborde d'énergie (page 2)
- ✓ LRC Contractors Ltd dévoile le secret des succès (page 6)
- ✓ La première nation de Saddle Lake fait son trou dans le secteur gazier et pétrolier (page 3)
- ✓ La Première nation de Fort McKay prend son avantage en main (page 7)
- ✓ La Société Énergisante harmonise l'avenir de l'énergie à Wood Buffalo (page 4)
- ✓ Les relations harmonieuses passent avant tout à Wood Buffalo (page 4)
- ✓ Mikewee Slings & Safety Ltd : produit de qualité, service garant (page 5)
- ✓ Le nettoyage va bon train à Fort Chipewyan (page 8)

DANS CE NUMERO :



Le revenu moyen annuel d'un Autochtone en Alberta est environ 17 000 \$ comparativement à 26 000 \$ pour un non-Autochtone de la même province. De plus, le taux de dépendance à l'aide sociale est de 46 % pour les Autochtones contre moins de 3 % pour les non-Autochtones.

C'est pourtant ANC. Au cours des trois dernières années, a multiplicité car cinq les fonds attribués au développement économique, passant ainsi de 25 à 125 millions de dollars.

La augmentation de ces fonds a entraîné une augmentation des collectivités autochtones et d'autres gouvernements, une aide financière sans précédent.

**AINC poursuit son engagement à favoriser les partenariats**

# ENTREPRISES AUTOCHTONES EN ALBERTA

# GENS-D'ICI

# GRASSROOTS

## First Nation Business in Alberta

Alberta Business Awards of Distinction Special Issue Winter 2005

# Recognizing Aboriginal business in Alberta

The Government of Canada is committed to working with Aboriginal people to improve their quality of life and to build a better future for all Canadians.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) recognizes the importance of economic self-reliance and is working to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the Canadian economy.

To develop sustainable, prosperous futures, INAC provides investment support to Aboriginal communities to build the foundations for economic development. The department does this, in part, through direct support of economic opportunities which require financial support to get off the ground but which become viable economic successes in their own right.

INAC invested \$69.3 million in fiscal year 2003/2004 in 425 First Nation and Inuit opportunity-driven economic development projects across the country. These investments leveraged over \$335 million and created almost 4,500 jobs.

In Alberta, during this same fiscal year, INAC invested over \$7.5 million into First Nation economic development projects. This government investment was able to generate over \$23 million in economic activity within the province, creating or maintaining almost 3,500 full and part-time jobs.

To honour this First Nation contribution to Alberta's economy, INAC in Alberta and the Alberta Chambers of Commerce created, four years ago, two new Business Awards of Distinction. One of the categories, the Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction, recognizes a successful First Nation-owned business. The nominees in this category are Bigstone Ventures Ltd., Kainaiwa Resources Inc. and Little Red River Cree Nation Group of Companies.

The other award, the INAC/AWPI (Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative) Aboriginal Relations Best Practice Award of Distinction, recognizes "mainstream" businesses in Alberta that demonstrate outstanding achievement in Aboriginal business, employment and training. The nominees in this category are Western Lakota Energy Services Inc., Little Red



River Forestry Ltd. Woodlands Division and Bigstone Store Ltd.

The Alberta Business Awards of Distinction are the most prestigious business awards presented in Alberta each year. Recognizing excellence in Alberta's business community, the awards are presented at a gala banquet featuring all of the glamour and glitz of the Academy Awards.

This year's awards took place February 23, 2005 at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton.

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce is a federation of 127 Chambers of Commerce which, in turn, represent over 22,000 businesses in the province. A description of each of the finalists for these two INAC-sponsored awards are profiled in this special INAC Alberta issue of Grassroots.

Aboriginal business has an important role to play in the lifeblood of Alberta's economy. We honour those businesses with this special edition.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- ✓ Bigstone ventures into oil and gas industry (page 2)
- ✓ Oil and gas flows though the veins of the Blood Tribe (page 3)
- ✓ Big list of companies for Little Red River Cree Nation (page 4)
- ✓ Aboriginal partnerships – key to Western Lakota success (page 5)
- ✓ The little company that grew to be a major player (page 6)
- ✓ Bigstone Store Ltd. is big business (page 7)



# Bigstone ventures into oil and gas industry

Economic development is alive and well at Bigstone Cree Nation.

Located in the heart of one of Alberta's oil-rich regions, Bigstone has been itching to participate in the oil and gas industry. In 1997, when an opportunity to form a partnership with Petrocare Services Ltd. came along, Bigstone Cree Nation jumped.

The partnership with Petrocare Services Ltd., an oil company out of Edson, Alberta, was named Bigstone Ventures Ltd.

Initially, the company manufactured and fabricated storage tanks and piping for lease sites. It has since grown into the largest supplier of oil and gas operators, maintenance and construction crews in the Wabasca area. It also has a fleet of trucks, including one-ton or three-ton pickers and, thanks to its partnership with Petrocare, access to a large variety of tools and equipment.

"We have worked for all the major players in the oil and gas industry," said David Zabot, manager.

"Our aim is to provide the best possible service at the best possible price to our customers."



PHOTO BY: DEAN E. GLADUE

*Construction crews working in the Wabasca area.*

In 2001, Bigstone Ventures Ltd. set out a plan to achieve growth, sustainability and profitability. Its main focus was to develop a full-time and long-term workforce that would be a first call for companies that needed quality labour quickly. By 2003, the company was right on track.

Bigstone Ventures Ltd. currently has over 80 full-time employees and a total workforce of over 130.

"We are the largest employer in both Bigstone and Wabasca," said Zabot.

"And I am proud to say over 80 per cent of our employees are Bigstone members."

The company is also very community oriented.

It is a member of steering committees for the youth apprenticeship

program and the registered apprenticeship program. It helped with the creation of the oil and gas operating program for the local Mistassini High School, the petroleum industry training program at Northern Lakes College and the Bigstone Cree Nation pre-trades training program. In addition, it provides sponsorship to a number of schools and organizations in the area.

"We also take great pride in our involvement with Alberta's Promise," said Zabot.

Alberta's Promise, established in April 2003, builds partnerships with communities, businesses, service clubs, foundations and agencies to work together in directing more resources to benefit children and youth. It operates under five promises, including providing a healthy start, and leadership and innovation.

"We love being a part of our community," said Zabot.

"We strive to be good corporate citizens."

# Oil and gas flows through the veins of the Blood Tribe

Geographically the largest First Nation in the country, the Blood reserve in southern Alberta holds almost 142,000 hectares of vast natural resources potential.

To manage this potential, the Blood Tribe-owned Kainaiwa Resources Inc. began operation in 1997.

In seven short years, the company has overseen the opening of over 90 new oil and gas wells and has increased revenue to the Blood Tribe to more than \$7 million annually. From 100 employees in 2001, the company now employs almost 400 Blood Tribe members.

In addition to its management of on-reserve oil and gas wells, the company has a 50 per cent interest in a 3,000-metre drilling rig that has drilled wells on the Blood reserve and is active in northern Alberta and British Columbia. The rig is booked for the next four years.

Throughout its operational year, Kainaiwa Resources Inc. manages to

generate funds from various services provided to oil and gas companies working on the Blood reserve. These dollars are invested back into the community, mainly in the area of youth and education.

Last year the company donated more than \$22,000 to various causes, focussing on youth and elder activities. It also awarded a high-school graduate incentive contribution of \$250 to the top five graduating students at Kainai High School and to the top Blood Tribe students in the surrounding communities. For tribal post-secondary students, the company also provided four \$500 scholarships.

Along with oil and gas resources, the Blood reserve also offers coal and lumber and the reserve also contains one of North America's few deposits of ammonite.



*Oilfield equipment used by Kainaiwa Resources Inc.*

PHOTO BY: KAINAIWA RESOURCES INC.

The rare gemstone was discovered by Blackfoot Indians in the Rocky Mountains, who called it buffalo stone. Since every single gemstone is a fossil, it is regarded as the rarest gem on earth.

"We provide the only major source of revenue for the Tribe," said David Shade, general manager of Kainaiwa Resources Inc.

"One of our greatest achievements is that our company awarded nearly 400 jobs to our tribal members last year."





# Big list of companies for Little Red River Cree Nation

Despite its geographic isolation, Little Red River Cree Nation in northwestern Alberta is a First Nation full of promise and entrepreneurial spirit. With a registered population of just over 3,800, the First Nation has developed a parcel of successful businesses.

Engaging in profit-generating businesses that create wealth for the community, that create jobs for members, that develop self-employment opportunities, and that ensure businesses are culturally appropriate and operated with long-term sustainability, is the base on which this First Nation has built its business philosophy.

"Building on the natural resources abundant around our communities of John D'Or Prairie, Fox Lake and Garden River, the Little Red River Cree Nation has found a niche in the marketplace of northern Alberta," said Chief Floyd Noskiye.

There are nine companies operated by the Little Red River Cree Nation. Companies ranging from consulting to fire fighting demonstrate the diversity of the entrepreneurial sprit of this First Nation:

- *Little Red River Forestry Ltd.* provides forestry planning, harvesting and silviculture services in the woodland operations.
- *Little Red River Wildland Firefighters Inc.* provides firefighting services to the



*Little Red River Wildland Firefighters Inc.*

province of Alberta. The company has over 75 trained firefighters to draw upon.

- *Little Red Air Service Ltd.* specializes in air charter passenger flights, freight hauling, air ambulance services and specialized medical patient transfers.
- *Fifth Meridian Market Ltd.* comprises one of the retail components of the Little Red River Cree Nation's group of companies. Groceries, convenience products and gasoline are some of the products available.
- *Caribou Mountain Wilderness* provides fly-in, trophy-level sport fishing and guided adventure tours.
- *High Level True Value Hardware* is owned and operated by the First Nation. Sales have increased to the point where this store is one of the top-10 revenue

producers in Canada for True Value Hardware stores.

- *SIS Business Alliance* is a joint venture between the Little Red River Cree Nation and SIS Strategic Information Systems. This partnership is focused on activity in the information technology sector.
- *Kewetin Business Development Corporation* is a business incubation service for all First Nation people in the High Level region. Services offered though the corporation include assistance with business plan development, financing, accounting and administration services.
- *Askee Development Corporation* provides strategic direction to all the Little Red River Cree Nation companies and initiates the operation of new ventures for the First Nation based on the results of ongoing feasibility studies.



*One of the aircraft in the Little Red Air Services Ltd. fleet.*

# Aboriginal partnerships – key to Western Lakota success



*First Nation members work on one of Western Lakota Energy Services Inc.'s many drilling rigs.*

Formed in 2001, Western Lakota Energy Services Inc. constructs and operates a fleet of high-performance oil and gas drilling rigs in western Canada. The company has 15 rigs in operation with an additional three presently under construction and due to be completed in the first quarter of 2005. Plans for further expansion include the construction of an additional six drilling rigs bringing the total to 24 before the end of 2005. Their innovative and proactive approaches are examples of best practices that have truly enhanced their growth.

Western Lakota's Aboriginal partnerships have been beneficial to all involved. Over the past few years their partnerships have expanded to First Nations throughout

Alberta and the Métis Nation of Alberta. The year 2004 was an especially busy one for expansion and forming partnerships. Dene Tha' First Nation added two rigs to its fleet, bringing its total to five, Samson Cree Nation added another rig bringing its total to three, and new partnerships were formed with Duncan's First Nation and the Blood Tribe.

Saddle Lake First Nation is a 50 per cent owner in Lakota Rig #4 and has been very pleased with the performance of the partnership.

"This project is very important to our community and members," said Saddle Lake Chief Eddy Makokis.

"We are determined to work with industry and government to maximize economic benefits from resource development, while ensuring the protection of our Treaty rights and the enhancement of our traditional ways."

Another excellent example of a very successful partnership is with the Dene Tha' First Nation. The partnership was formed in 2002 starting with two rigs, and using the proceeds of the partnership, the First Nation now owns 50 per cent of five drilling rigs, which truly reflects the growth potential of these partnerships.

Western Lakota is fortunate since it can access the rich and abundant workforce made available through its Aboriginal partners. Through Western Lakota's corporate mandate to use its "best efforts" in maximizing Aboriginal labour, over 20 per cent of the company's employees are Aboriginal. Western Lakota appreciates the cultural diversity and needs of its partners and their respective communities. Their innovative approaches to community

relations also lies in their corporate flexibility, which has a more Aboriginal holistic view.

"Our Aboriginal employees have been a great complement to our already strong crews," said Western Lakota President and CEO Elson McDougald.

"Aboriginal people represent one of the largest untapped and capable labour pools in the country."

With the goal to recruit and retain Aboriginal employees, a training program was developed in consultation with government, industry and Aboriginal representatives. This program is currently achieving excellent results and retention rates have improved significantly. This proactive approach allows for increased growth because there is direct involvement in decision making and an increased sense of ownership.

In addition, the company has also created an auxiliary services manager position, whose responsibility is to arrange work for its customers, using Aboriginal suppliers and contractors.

"By offering this service we are taking proactive steps to help Aboriginal communities and individual suppliers or contractors develop their business and exposure within the industry," said McDougald.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has been very supportive of these projects by providing federal funding over the past few years to help local First Nations become involved in the oil and gas industry.

# The little company that grew to be a major player



## Little Red River Forestry Ltd Woodlands Division

In remote northwestern Alberta three communities on the banks of the Peace River comprise the Little Red River Cree Nation. This entrepreneurial group of communities has come together to form Little Red River Forestry Ltd. Woodlands Division. It is a small but growing company that has evolved into a specialized service provider for larger national and international players in the forestry industry.

"We have developed training programs for our people in harvesting, tree planting, block layout, geographic information systems, stand tending and forest management for larger forestry companies," said Dave Cole, manager of Little Red River Forestry Ltd.

"Our ability to focus in on the niche markets has proven to be the key to our success in this industry."

Little Red River Forestry Ltd. has become more than a simple commercial enterprise. The company has also made an impact in economic, cultural, social and political community development for the First Nation.

In economic development, job opportunities for members of the First Nation are the highest priority. In the last four years over 150 new full, part-time and seasonal positions have been created.

Stakeholder consultation is also an important prerequisite to the development of annual forestry operating plans. Little Red River Forestry Ltd. continually works with communities and settlements to identify "no-cut" areas that respect traditional trap lines, burial sites, medicinal plants and religious sites that might infringe on the cultural identity and development of the Little Red River Cree Nation.

Youth participation in the forestry industry is also strongly encouraged by the company. Presentations at on-reserve schools highlighting potential career fields and employment opportunities are done on a yearly basis. The company has



*Little Red River Cree Nation member working with a de-limbing machine.*

worked to integrate forestry technology and practice into the curriculum of area schools. Elder pilgrimages to the historic site at Lac Ste. Anne are sponsored each year by the company, completing the circle of social development within the community.

"We are teaching our young to respect what the elders have managed and protected for us so that we may be able to do the same for future generations," said Little Red River Cree Nation Chief Floyd Noskiye.

Fostering beneficial working relationships with other levels of government, influencing policy development and industry practice is also a strength of Little Red River Forestry Ltd.

"By nurturing these relationships, members of the board of directors from Little Red River Forestry Ltd. have secured influential positions on a number of provincial and national forestry development and management committees and organizations," said Chief Noskiye.



*Quality control workers inspect raw timber waiting to be sent to local mills.*

# Bigstone Store Ltd. is big business



PHOTO BY: DEAN E. GLADUE

"We're very proud of our chicken," said Gladue.

"It is cooked in a combination oven using steam and elements. There is no grease used at all."

In the summer of 2004, Gladue's vision once again brought a whole new twist to the store.

He noticed that business was slow for a Husky restaurant owned by another Nation-owned company called Truckstop Ltd. He convinced chief and council that he could make it into a viable business and started leasing the restaurant.

Located six kilometres away from the other businesses on Highway 813, the restaurant serves up breakfast and daily specials to travelers, as well as nearby residents.

"Things have really picked up over the past couple of months," said Gladue.

"It's great to see regular customers coming in. Some sit and relax in our dining area while others take out food if they are in a hurry."

The Bigstone Store Ltd. proudly employs around 40 people and approximately 95 per cent are Bigstone members.

"Although we did not intentionally go out and hire Bigstone members, I am very pleased that we can provide jobs for our own people," said Gladue.

  
**Bigstone Store Ltd., owned by Bigstone Cree Nation in north central Alberta, has earned bragging rights by being one of the Nation's most thriving businesses.**

Just four years ago, Bigstone Store Ltd. was a convenience store/gas bar, in danger of going out of business. It was then that Bigstone Cree Nation chief and council decided a change was needed.

That change was the hiring of new general manager Harvey Gladue, a man with plenty of experience in store management and more importantly, a great vision for the re.

"The first thing I noticed when I took over was that the building next door was just being used for storage," said Gladue.

I started envisioning how we could use the building,"

After some research, Gladue discovered that Bigstone members, as well as residents of the neighbouring town of Wabasca, had no healthy alternative for eating out. He proposed to chief and council that the building should be used for a bakery/deli.

After some convincing they agreed and, some months later, Bigstone Store Ltd. was serving up everything from fresh baked goods to soup and sandwiches. The store also serves a specialty dish called "darn chicken," named after Gladue, whose nickname is "darn."



PHOTO BY: DEAN E. GLADUE

*Bigstone Bakery & Deli*

# Factoids

## What is the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)?

A partnership initiative of the federal government designed to increase the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the labour market. The federal government is committed to help Aboriginal peoples build stronger, healthier and more self-reliant communities. AWPI's goal is to educate and inform employers about the proven advantages of hiring Aboriginal peoples.

## Why is AWPI important?

Aboriginal peoples make up one of the fastest-growing segments of the population in Canada, increasing at almost twice the national average. They represent an increasingly educated, readily available workforce, eager to assume an active role in the country's economy.

Despite this, their participation in the labour force is lower and their unemployment rate higher than that of non-Aboriginal Canadians.

## What kinds of activities does AWPI do?

- assisting employers to build capacity in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal workers
- developing and distributing skill-building tools and resources for employers

- producing and distributing awareness-building materials and participating in awareness activities
- organizing and participating in conferences, seminars and workshops
- creating, promoting and participating in stakeholder networks
- communicating events related to Aboriginal employment issues
- identifying and promoting best practices and role models
- facilitating pilot projects

## AWPI Partnership Strategy

AWPI is committed to working with all sectors of the economy in promoting Aboriginal employment. AWPI's partnership strategy brings together employers, the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders, through partnership agreements that assist employers in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal workers.

*For further information on this initiative, please contact:*

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Regional Coordinator, AWPI  
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Alberta Region  
Tel: (780) 495-3782 E-mail: crossenp@ainc.gc.ca

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chef Noskye.  
développement forestiers », a ajouté le

provincial et national de gestion et de

nombreux comités et organismes

postes de grande influence au sein de

Red River Foresty Ltd. ont accédé à des

du conseil d'administration de la Little

« En favorisant ces relations, les membres

Foresty Ltd.

des points forts de la Little Red River

de pratiques de l'industrie sont également

contribuer à l'élaboration de politiques et

d'autres ordres de gouvernement et

Entretenir des relations favorables avec

Red River, chef de la nation crée de Little

Noskye, des générations futures », a note M. Floyd

nous puissions en faire autant au profit

aut gérer et protéger pour nous afin que

l'importance de respecter ce que les sagas

« Nous soulignons aux jeunes

collectivité.

Le développement social au sein de la

ainsi l'achèvement de ses activités de

partaines par la campagne, marquant

une histoire à lac Ste-Anne soit

des pelémages de sagas à destination du

lieu historique à la région. Chaque année

dans les écoles de la province scolaire suivie

forêts des technologies et des pratiques

intègrer des technologies et apprendre

Par ailleurs, la campagne sera appliquée

carrière et d'emploi offertes par l'industrie

valuer les différentes perspectives de

présenter des exposés qui mettent en

aux écoles dans les réserves pour y

être membre de la nation crée de Little Red River se sent

d'une ébarbureuse



Avant d'être transporté à des scieries locales, du bois  
d'œuvre brut est inspecté par des travailleurs chargés du  
contrôle de la qualité.



La compagnie encourage les jeunes à l'industrie  
à participer. Chaque année, un rend visite  
forestière. Participants nationaux au point des

forestière. Chaque année, un rend visite  
à l'exploitation forestière à Little Red River

et les lieux d'importance religieuse, et  
les parcs de pique-nique traditionnels, les

« interdites au déboisement », notamment  
colonies en vue de réparer des zones

concrètes avec des collectivités des  
Red River Foresty Ltd. travaille de

d'exploitation forestière. En fait, la Little  
Red River Foresty Ltd. - se sont

rassemblées pour former la société  
de Woodlands. Il s'agit d'une petite

division Little Red River Foresty Ltd., division  
régionale L'esprit d'entreprise - se sont

collectivités situées au rivage de la  
Little Red River, composée de trois

de l'Alberta est établie la nord-ouest  
Dans un coin éloigné du

économique, la question des perspectives  
d'emploi pour les membres de la

sur le plan du développement  
économique, une simple entreprise

commerciale. En effet, la compagnie a  
aussi fait sa marque au niveau de

l'expansion économique, culturelle,  
sociale et politique de la Première nation.

Au cours des quatre dernières années, on  
a créé plus de 150 emplois à temps plein

et saisonniers.

commun dans cette industrie. »

avérie la clé du succès que nous avons

vers certains marchés à creneaux s'est  
« Notre capacité d'orienter nos activités

directeur de la Little Red River Foresty  
forêts », a souligne M. Dave Cole,

aux besoins de grandes sociétés  
géographique, des systèmes d'information

de coupe, de l'aménagement de partentes  
d'arbres, de l'exploitation forestière, de la plantation

de nos membres dans les domaines de  
programmes de formation à l'intention

« Nous avons mis au point des  
interventions à l'industrie forestière.

Participants nationaux à l'industrie forestière.

services spécialisés auprès de grands  
évolue pour devenir un fournisseur de

campagne en voie d'expansion qui a

Little Red River Foresty Ltd., division  
Woodlands. Il s'agit d'une petite

rassemblees pour former la société

division Little Red River, division  
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collectivités situées au rivage de la

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Dans un coin éloigné du nord-ouest

de l'Alberta est établie la nation crée de

l'exploitation forestière Woodlands

division Little Red River, division  
régionale L'esprit d'entreprise -



# La petite compagnie qui a évolué pour devenir un grand participant

Entreprises autochtones en Alberta

**GENS D'ICI**



Le succès de Western Lakota Energy Services Inc. démarre avec l'ouverture d'un bureau à Fort McMurray en 2001. La compagnie offre des services aux Premières Nations et aux Autochtones du Nord Alberta. Au cours des dernières années, l'entreprise a obtenu plusieurs contrats avec les gouvernements fédéral et provincial pour la construction et l'entretien de projets énergétiques dans les régions nordiques du Canada.

En 2005, la compagnie a été nommée « entreprise la plus innovante » par le magazine « Aboriginal Business ». L'entreprise a également reçu le prix « Entreprise autochtone de l'année » au festival des Entreprises autochtones de l'Alberta. Ces succès sont attribuables à une approche holistique qui intègre les besoins environnementaux et sociaux dans tous les aspects de son travail.

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En 2013, la compagnie a été nommée « entreprise la plus innovante » par le magazine « Aboriginal Business ». L'entreprise a également reçu le prix « Entreprise autochtone de l'année » au festival des Entreprises autochtones de l'Alberta. Ces succès sont attribuables à une approche holistique qui intègre les besoins environnementaux et sociaux dans tous les aspects de son travail.

En 2015, la compagnie a été nommée « entreprise la plus innovante » par le magazine « Aboriginal Business ». L'entreprise a également reçu le prix « Entreprise autochtone de l'année » au festival des Entreprises autochtones de l'Alberta. Ces succès sont attribuables à une approche holistique qui intègre les besoins environnementaux et sociaux dans tous les aspects de son travail.

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## La clé du succès connaît par la Western Lakota

### Des partenariats formés avec des Autochtones -





# La tribu des Blood a vraiment le pétrole et gaz « dans le sang »

Entreprises autochtones en Alberta

**GENS-D'ICI**  
Entreprises autochtones en Alberta

« Une de nos plus grandes réalisations : l'an dernier, notre campagne a offert près de 400 emplois à des membres de notre tribu.

« Nous sommes la seule grande source de recettes pour la tribu », a note M. David Shadé, directeur général de la Kainaiwa Resources Inc.

Cette pierre précieuse a été découverte dans les Roches par les Pieds-Noirs, qui l'ont baptisée Buffalo Stone. Plutôt que toutes les pierres précieuses sont, sans exception, des fossiles, elles sont perçues comme les pierres précieuses les plus rares au monde.

Outre ses ressources en pétrole et en gaz, la réserve indienne des Blood est un fourmisseur de charbon et de bois d'œuvre; on y trouve également le seul gisement d'ammolite, à quelques exceptions près, en Amérique du Nord.

La dernière, la campagne a fait don de plus de 22 000 \$ à des causes axées sur diverses activités destinées aux jeunes et aux sages. Elle a aussi remis des primes d'encouragement à des étudiants de niveau postsecondaire d'étude d'une valeur de 500 \$ chacune à qui sont membres de la tribu.

Du matériel utilisé dans les champs pétroliers par la Kalinaïwa Resources Inc.



PHOTO prise par: KAINAIWA RESOURCES INC

different services aux sociétés gazières et pétrolières et œuvre dans la réserves indienne des Blood. Ces fonds sont dans la ensuite réinvestis collectivité, notamment au profit des Jeunes d'éducation.

La plus grande Première nation au pays en termes de superficie, la réserve indienne des Blood, située dans le sud de l'Alberta, occupe près de 142 000 hectares de terres potentiellement riches en ressources naturelles.

Dans le but de gérer ce potentiel, la Société Kainaiwa Resources Inc., qui appartient à la tribu des Blood, a entrepris ses activités en 1997.

A detailed anatomical illustration of a fossilized ammonite shell, showing its internal siphuncular structures and associated organic remains.

En L'espacé de sept ans à Peine, la compagnie a vellié à la mise en service de plus de 90 puits de pétrole et de gaz. Grâce à la compagnie, les recettes annuelles de la tribu des Blood se sont élevées à 7 millions de dollars. Une campagne qui disposeait de 100 employés en 2001 compte maintenant 400 membres parmi son effectif près de 400 membres de la tribu des Blood.



bonne présence sociale. »  
« Nous nous efforçons d'assurer une collectivité », ajoute M. Zabot.  
nos fassions partie de notre « Nous aimons vraiment le fait que

l'innovation. de à favoriser un départ sans et à consister à assurer du leadership qui consiste à cinq promesses, dont celle verte de ces jeunes. Elle existe en énérants et des jeunes. Elle existe en davantage de ressources au profit des et agences en vue d'orienter collectivités, entreprises, fondations différentes clubs de service, l'établissement de partenariats avec est une initiative qui favorise Crée en avril 2003, Alberta's Promise

M. Zabot.  
Alberta's Promise », a mentionné de notre participation à l'initiative « Nous sommes également très fiers

organismes et écoles dans la région. autre, elle parvient de nombreux dans la nation créée de Bigstone. En exercice d'un mètre offert formation préparatoire à Lakes, et au programme de pétrolier au Collège Northern Mississauga, du programme de formation dans l'industrie gazier à l'école secondaire gazier. La compagnie a contribué au lancement du Programme d'apprentissage pour les jeunes et du

En effet, elle siège à des comités

Il s'agit également d'une compagnie axée sur la collectivité.

« Nous avons pour objectif d'offrir à nos clients le meilleur service

employés sont des membres de la que plus de 80 p. cent de nos « Par ailleurs, je signale avec fierté de Wabasca », affirme M. Zabot.

remarque M. David Zabot, directeur général participants à l'industrie « Nous avons travaillé pour tous les

« Nous sommes le plus grand employeur à Bigstone et dans la région de Wabasca », affirme M. Zabot.

d'outils et de matériel. Elle accès à une vaste gamme de trois tonnes, et grâce à son partenariat avec la société Petrocaribe, des ramasseuses d'une tonne et de disposes d'un parc de camions, dont

La Bigstone Ventures Ltd. complète dont 80 employés à temps plein.

disponibilité et gazier dans la région de Wabasca. De plus, la compagnie

2003, la compagnie était sur la bonne

et d'équipés d'entretenir et de importait fourmis aux exploitants

travaillera de grande qualité. En qui aurait vite besoin de premiers recours pour les compagnies

évolue pour développer le plus différents concessions. Elle a depuis fabrique de réservoirs de stockage

une main-d'œuvre à long terme. qui représente une option de composition d'ouvertures à temps plein

Dans un premier temps, la compagnie se spécialisait dans la

en 2001, la Bigstone Ventures Ltd., a établi un plan propice à la croissance, à la viabilité et à la rentabilité.

Société Bigstone Ventures Ltd.

possible au prix le plus abordable

à Edson, en Alberta, a été baptisée la

Des équipés de construction à l'œuvre dans la région de Wabasca.

Partenariat établi avec la



PHOTO PRISSE PAR: DEAN E. GLADUE

Petrocaribe Services Ltd., la nation crée ou s'est présente la possibilité de former un partenariat avec la

L'occasion de participer à l'industrie avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme nation crée de Bigstone a envisagé de l'Alberta, la province située de Bigstone a saisi l'occasion.

bon train dans la nation crée de

Le développement économique va

Bigstone.

# La nation crée de Bigstone pétrolière et gazier

Entreprises autochtones en Alberta

**GENS D'ICI**

## DANS CE NUMERO :

- ✓ La tribu des Blood a vraiment le privilège de se faire appeler « dans le sang »
- ✓ La nation cree de Bigstone Penetee Industrie Petroleire est gazielle (page 2)
- ✓ Des partenariats tormes avec des Autociternes
- ✓ La petite campagne qui a évolué pour devenir un grand participant (page 6)
- ✓ Une longue liste de compagnies pour la nation cree de Little Red River (page 4)
- ✓ La petite campagne qui a évolué pour devenir un grand participant (page 7)
- ✓ La tribu Sioux par la Western Lakota (page 5)

Les entreprises autochtones jouent un rôle important dans la viabilité économique de l'Alberta; ce numéro spécial est donc publié en leur honneur.

La Chambre de commerce de L'Alberette est une fédération qui regroupe 22 000 entreprises dans la province. Dans ce numéro spécial de *Geants d'Ici*, publiée par le MAINC - Bureau régional de l'Alberette, nous présentons le profil de deux partenaires pour le MAINC.

L'édition 2005 des prix a eu lieu le 23 février au Centre des congrès Shaw à Edmonton.

Les Prix des Entreprises Internationales distinguées sont les Prix d'entreprise des Plus Prestigieux à être Présentés dans le Monde. Ces prix soulignent l'excellence au sein d'un secteur qui se déroule avec la même éclat que les Oscars.

Woodlands, et le Bigstone Store Ltd.  
Forestry Ltd., division de  
Service Inc., la Little Red River  
sort à Westerm Lakota Entry



# Hommage aux entreprises autochtones en Alberta

Un numéro spécial sur les Prix des entreprises alternatives distinguees Hiver 2005

## **Entreprises autochtones en Alberta**

# IDIOT SNEAKERS





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